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SUBJECT: CYPRUS: LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 126578

(U) This cable is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) Following is Post's response to Reftel questionnaire (answers keyed to questions).

-- Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

No, the ROC has not worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba. Underpinning much of ROC foreign policy is desire for engagement and dialogue with recognized, sovereign governments regardless of their human rights record. With current Cypriot Communist Party Secretary General Demetris Christofias now the ROC President, it is highly unlikely that Cyprus will demand that the Raul Castro regime improve treatment of dissidents, allow free speech, introduce economic liberalization, etc.

-- Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

No, see above. Cyprus, dating back to its days in the Non-aligned Movement, has enjoyed warm relations with Cuba, and has traditionally supported it in international fora like the United Nations.

-- Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

On September 29, immediately after meeting with Secretary Rice at UNGA, Cypriot Foreign Minister Markos Kyprianou traveled to Havana for a two-day official visit. His official program included meetings with Cuban Government and Communist Party officials, but no calls on dissidents or human rights activists. In Havana, Kyprianou announced that Cyprus would open an embassy there in 2009 (Cypriot relations with Cuba are currently conducted from the ROC embassy in Mexico City).

Kyprianou met with Cuba's Foreign Minister Felipe Perez Roque to discuss bilateral relations, the Cyprus problem and EU - Cuba relations. During his stay in Cuba, Kyprianou also met the President of the Cuban National Assembly (ANPP), Minister for International Investment Marta Lomas, Deputy Minister for International Cooperation Yiliam Jimenez Exposito, and other officials.

-- Did the host country offer or deliver humanitarian or other assistance to the Cuban people in the wake of the major damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav (August 30) and Ike (September 8)?

Post is unaware of any such assistance. Most Cypriot foreign aid is

disbursed in the Middle East and Africa.

-- What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba? What host country businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair?

The Central Bank of Cyprus has confirmed that the flow of investment from Cyprus to Cuba, and vice versa, was zero in 2007. Stock investment from Cyprus to Cuba (by the end of 2007) remains around Euros 222,000 (USD 284,000). Stock investment from Cuba to Cyprus by the end of 2007 remains nil.

Christos Petsides, Director of Trade, at the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KEBE) also confirmed that KEBE had not been involved in sending any trade delegation to the Havana Trade Fair.

-- Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

On December 8, 2008, Stavros Amvrosiou, Minister Plenipotentiary and Head of the Department of America at the MFA, confirmed that Cyprus had not signed any trade or other agreements with Cuba. Amvrosiou also noted that he was not aware of any scholarships, in either direction, between Cuba and Cyprus.

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